

Appearing *pro se* (from the Latin, "for himself") in District Court can be a daunting and complex task. Although some accommodations are made to ensure equal access to justice,

*pro se*

litigants are expected to comply with the Court's rules of procedure and decorum, and the arguments raised by

*pro se*

parties are held to the same standard as practicing attorneys. Parties without legal representation are strongly encouraged to file a motion with the court for appointment of

*pro bono*

counsel. You may also be able to seek help from legal aid organizations or law school legal clinics.

If you are committed to representing yourself in District Court, the following information will help ensure that your case proceeds smoothly and equitably.

The Federal Rules of Civil Procedure ("FRCP") are the rules that all parties are expected to use in preparation for and during a trial in Federal Court. Cornell University maintains an archive of legal information that includes an [online copy of the FRCP](#). Each District in the federal system also maintains Local Rules that augment or refine the FRCP. Generally speaking, you need to be able to cite the rule that permits, requires, or otherwise authorizes you to file a motion or other document with the court. The rules also cover the types of information you may request from the other party, scheduling orders and pre-trial court appearances and hearings, and many other aspects of trial practice. In addition, the District has its own Local Rules that are particular to this Court and its procedures. It's important to check both when you are researching how to file a complaint or motion with the court.

The Federal Rules of Evidence ("FRE") are the rules that describe the allowability and proper use of witness testimony, documents, and other evidence in a civil trial. Cornell University also maintains an [online copy of the FRE](#). As you build your case, you will need to verify that the evidence you are relying on is going to be allowed in court. Not everything that was said during the course of a dispute that gives rise to a civil action is admissible in court. Documents that cannot be authenticated may not be admissible. It's therefore important to closely review the FRE and ensure that your evidence will be allowed by the court.

The Oregon State Bar has a [guide to pro se representation](#). Although geared to the Oregon state courts, it is nonetheless useful to review. There are many suggestions and case

management tips that are equally applicable in District Court.

[LawHelp.org](#) has a list of resources and information for the state of Oregon, including links to legal aid organizations and other pro bono and pro se resources: [Law Help's Oregon page](#) .

Finally, the National Center for State Courts and a variety of nonprofit legal organizations have joined together to create [SelfHelpSupport.org](#) , a resource center for self-help legal resources, *pro se* information, and more.